Introduction of Shatabdi Express in Kerala

413. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleaed to state;

(a) whether Government have introduced a Shatabdi Express in Kerala;

(b) whether it is a fact that Kerala is left out so far in introducing Shatabdi Express; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) to (c) No, Sir. Trains are introduced depending upon availability of traffic, operational feasibility and availability of resources and not State-wise.

सुल्तानगंज से देवघर तक रेल लाइन बिछाये जाने संबंधी परियोजना

414 . श्री जनार्दन यादव: क्या रेल मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि सरकार ने सुल्तानगंज से देवघर तक बरास्ता अमरपुर बानरू और कतिनिया रेल लाइन बिछाने की एक परियोजना को मंजूरी दे दी है; और

(ख) यदि हां, उपर्युक्त परियोजना पर कब तक कार्य आरम्भ होने की संभावना है यदि नहीं, तो इसके क्या कारण हैं?

रेल मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री राम नाईक): (क) जी नहीं, फिलहाल केवल एक सर्वेक्षण स्वीकृत किया है।

(ख) प्रश्न नही उठता।

Irregularities—in Railway Recruitment Boards

415. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have found large number of irregularities in the functioning of the various railway recruitment boards;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether in view of serious irregularities, Government have decided to scrap the railway recruitment boards and to bring transperancy; and

(d) if so, what other system is being adopted to make recruitment in the Railways?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) Some irregularities such as leakage of Question papers, demand of money from candidates, fraudulent drawing of panels, award of disproportionately high marks to chosen candidates, admitting applications of chosen candidates after the last date of admission, manipulation of answer papers, etc. have come to notice.

(c) and (d) No decision has been taken to scrap the Railway Recruitment Board (RRBs). However, the functioning of the RRBs has been reviewed and a number of steps as given in the Statement enclosed have been taken to revamp them (*seen* below).

Statement

The functioning of the Railway Recruitment Boards has been reviewed and a number of steps as enumerated below have been taken to ravamp them:

(i) The constitute an apex body named Railway Recruitment Control Board (RRCB) at Railway Board level with, Member Staff, Railway Board as Chairman, Additional Member (Staff) and Additional Member (Vigilance), Railway Board as Members and Executive Director, Establishment (RRB), Railway Board as Secretary, to issue policy guidelines and to oversee the functioning of Railway Recruitment Boards;

(ii) to terminate the services of all *adhoc* non-Railway Chairmen and repatriate all serving Railway Officers in Selection/ Junior Administrative Grades working on *adhoc* basis as Chairmen/RRBs;

(iii) to fill up the post of Chairmen/RRBs by serving Senior Administrative Grade Railway Officers from Zonal Railways except two posts of Chairmen of RRBs at Chandigarh and Jammu-Srinagar presently held by UPSC selected incumbents.

(iv) to replace incumbents of the posts of member Secretary & Assistant Secretary with serving Railway Officers in appropriate grades and also to replace the group 'C' and 'D' staff of all the RRBs;

(v) to change the practice of associating non-official members belonging to SC/ST, Minority and OBC communities, in the Interview Committees and to revert back to the earlier practice of associating serving Railway Officers belonging to these communities, with the provision that in case of non-availability of serving Railway Officers of the respective communities, State/Central Govt./P.S.U./ Bank Officers belonging to these communities and in case of further difficulty, retired Railway Officers of proven integrity belonging to these communities will be associated;

(vi) to introduce the system of duplicate carbonless Answer sheets, the duplicate Answer sheets being sent to the RRCB for independent evaluation, as considered necessary; and

(vii) to set up a grievances redressal machinery to deal systematically with various complaints and representations regarding the functioning of the RRBs' and selections conducted by them.

Violation of recommendation on placement of orders for wagons

416. SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:
SHRI GAYA SINGH:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the recommendation of the Rajya Sabha Committee on placement of orders for wagons is being violated by the Railways; and

(b) if so, the relevant recommendation and details of the action taken by Government to implement it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) Action Taken Note by the Ministry of Railways on the recommendations of the Rajya Sabha Committee has already been submitted to Rajya Sabha Secretariat in August 1996. It was mentioned in Action Taken Note that from 97-98, Railways would procure 75% through wagon India Limited and 25% through tender. It was also mentioned that effectiveness of this policy would be closely watched, so as to take suitable corrective action, if necessary, in the overall interest. Since procurement through tender resulted in substantial savings to Railways, a review of the above policy was carried out and it was decided after such a review to change the earlier policies from 98-99 and to procure full requirement of wagons through open competitive endering.

This change in policy was conveyed to Chairman Rajya Sabha vide this Ministry's letter dated 22.7.97 and also on the floor of the House on 14.8.97 during discussions on this Ministry's supplementary demands for grants.

Expansion and development projects for Railways

417. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleaded to state:

(a) whether many projects for the expansion and development of Railways are under construction;

(b) the details thereof, project-wise;

(c) the estimated cost thereof;

(d) the total amount spent thereon upto 31st March, 1998 and details of various sources for mobilising funds for these projects; and

(e) by when the above projects are likely to be completed ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Jhuggi Clusters near Railway Lines

418. SHRI BANGARU LAXMAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the vacant land lying near the railway lines is being converted into jhuggi clusters thus polluting the atmosphere around it;

(b) the reasons for Government not planning to give those lands to private agencies to convert that land into parks, etc; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the Government plan in this regard?